

APHIS – Plant Protection and Quarantine
Texas Department of Agriculture
Daily Situation Report: Panicle Rice Mite (PRM)
July 23, 2007

Survey and Diagnostics Information:

- **Survey**
 - Survey teams continue to implement a rigorous detection and delimiting survey for the panicle rice mite (PRM), *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, in and around a rice research facility in Alvin, Brazoria County, Texas.
 - A total of 42 sites (10 greenhouses; 1 compost pile; 19 research fields; 12 commercial production fields), totaling 207 acres, have been surveyed to date.
- **Identification and Diagnostics**
 - Initial identification is conducted at the PPQ Plant Inspection Station in Houston, TX. Samples are forwarded to the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Systematic Entomology Laboratory (SEL) in Washington, DC, for confirmation.
 - Since the initial detection in one of the greenhouses at the rice research facility, additional PRM detections have occurred at three other greenhouses, five rice fields, and one compost pile, all located at the research facility.

Operational Update:

- **Technical Working Group (TWG)**
 - APHIS has established a technical working group (TWG) of experts to discuss survey and control strategies in response to PRM. The group will continue to meet on a regular basis to address this developing situation and consider mitigation strategies.
- **Incident Command**
 - A total of 7 personnel are on-site (2-TDA and 5-APHIS).
- **Regulatory Actions**
 - APHIS has issued an Emergency Action Notification (EAN) to stop movement of all rice seed, rice plants and plant parts, and farm equipment.
- **Trace-back and Trace-forward**
 - Trace-back and trace-forward investigations to determine the source and potential distribution of PRM continue.

- **Treatment**

- The infested greenhouses were treated on July 17 with the insecticide dimethoate to suppress the level of PRM.
- The rice research facility plans to conduct Methyl Bromide trials on rice seed starting July 24 to determine the impact of the treatment on seed viability.

Trade Update:

- APHIS is in the process of informing the NAPO member countries and other trading partners.

Communication and Outreach:

- SPRO letter is scheduled to be issued on Tuesday July 28, 2007.
- PPQ Western Region convened a call with SPHDs and SPROs from the rice-producing States on July 20 to provide information about the Texas PRM find.

Background:

- On July 13, 2007, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of panicle rice mite (PRM), *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, at a rice research facility in Alvin, Brazoria County, Texas.
- The research facility is operated by a private entity, where it conducts hybrid rice research.
- The PRM is considered a serious rice pest in China, Philippines, and Taiwan, where it has caused substantial crop losses. Yield losses can range from 30 to 90 percent.
- In 1997, the pest was detected in the Caribbean region where it is now known to affect Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. In 2002, the mite was reported in Costa Rica and Nicaragua and, in 2005, in Colombia. Recent reports also indicate its presence in Mexico.
- Interceptions of this pest have been reported at greenhouses in Ohio and Texas during the last 10 years.
- There are two main reported hosts of RPM, Rice, *Oryza sativa*, and the weedy red rice, *Oryza latifolia*.